

## Hospice and Palliative Care Resources for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



### NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 04/27/20

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links.

*“You are there for your community. NHPCO is there for you.”*

#### Policy Updates

##### **CMS Discontinues Advance Payment Program and Will Reevaluate New Applications for Accelerated Payments**

In light of the \$175 billion recently appropriated for healthcare provider relief payments, on April 26, 2020 the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that it is reevaluating the amounts that will be paid under its Accelerated Payment Program and suspending its Advance Payment Program to Part B suppliers effective immediately.

Beginning on April 26, 2020 CMS will not be accepting any new applications for the Advance Payment Program, and CMS will be reevaluating all pending and new applications for Accelerated Payments in light of historical direct payments made available through HHS’s Provider Relief Fund. Significant additional funding will continue to be available to hospitals and other healthcare providers through other programs.

More information can be found on the [CMS Fact Sheet](#).

##### **CMS Clarifies that Survey Prioritization will Continue throughout the PHE**

CMS confirmed today that the [QSO 20-20](#) guidance will continue throughout the public health emergency. The prioritization of surveys is as follows:

- **Complaint/facility-reported incident surveys:** State survey agencies (SSAs) will conduct surveys related to complaints and facility-reported incidents (FRIs) that are triaged at the Immediate Jeopardy (IJ) level. A streamlined Infection Control review tool will also be utilized during these surveys, regardless of the Immediate Jeopardy allegation.
- **Targeted Infection Control Surveys:** Federal CMS and State surveyors will conduct targeted Infection Control surveys of providers identified through collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). They will use a streamlined review checklist to minimize the impact on provider activities, while ensuring providers are implementing actions to protect the health and safety of individuals to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Self-assessments:** The Infection Control checklist referenced above will also be shared with all providers and suppliers to allow for voluntary self-assessment of their Infection Control plan and protections.

During the prioritization period, the following surveys will not be authorized:

- Standard surveys for long term care facilities (nursing homes), hospitals, home health agencies (HHAs), intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IIDs), and hospices. This includes the life safety code and Emergency Preparedness elements of those standard surveys; and revisits that are not associated with IJ.

## **Resources**

### **Evaluation of Grief Support Services**

NHPCO members have free access to the [Evaluation of Grief Support Services](#) (EGSS) survey which is designed to evaluate grief support services from the perspective of the recipients of the services. The survey takes a comprehensive approach by including questions on a wide range of services, many of them optional so that hospices may tailor the EGSS survey to reflect the specific services they offer. The tool and report are a great way to monitor and demonstrate quality assurance and performance improvement opportunities of your bereavement program. Take advantage of this valuable benefit of membership.

### **Open-Access JPSM Articles**

Check out the collection of over [20 open-access #COVID-19 specific articles](#) available from the *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*.

### **Article of Interest**

- “[Pursuing a Good Death in the Time of COVID-19](#),” *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, Letter to the Editor, 4/20/2020.

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### **NHPCO Members Call to Action:**

NHPCO has created a “Commitment to Caring” sign-on letter to demonstrate our members’ commitment to addressing the extraordinary needs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Robust participation will show policymakers, grant makers, and our professional community that NHPCO member hospice and palliative care providers are rising to the challenge and providing the person-centered interdisciplinary care that is exactly what is needed during these times. We are requesting that the senior leader from each member add their organization’s name to our letter; those with multiple locations are asked to sign only once.

1. Log into the NHPCO website at [www.nhpc.org](http://www.nhpc.org).
2. Go to this URL: <https://www.nhpc.org/sign-on/>
3. Follow the prompt at the bottom of the page to add your organization’s name.

*This Commitment to Caring sign-on letter is intended for current NHPCO members only. More information on [membership is available online](#). We encourage non-member providers to consider joining the NHPCO community and adding your organization to our Commitment to Care letter.*